

10-8-16 Message to Beit Adonai Yisroel – Vayalech (“and he went”)  
 Torah Portion; Deut 31:1-30  
 Special Haftarah: Hos 14:2-10, Mic 7:18-20, and Joel 2:15-27  
 Suggested Acheron K’tuvim: 1 John 1:9

## Come Back!

**Central question of this message: Can you hear the voice of G-d calling you to come back to Him?**

Today we are in parasha Vayalech, which means “and he went”. In it we see that Moses is going to a place where he can speak to all of Israel.

Deut 31:1

*So Moses went and spoke these words to all Israel.*

הַדְּבָרִים	אֶת-	וַיְדַבֵּר	מֹשֶׁה	וַיֵּלֶךְ	31:1
words		and spake	Moses	And went	
<u>1697</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>1696</u>	<u>4872</u>	<u>1980</u>	
had'baariym	'et-	way'dabeer	Mosheh	Wayeelek	
		יִשְׂרָאֵל:	כָּל-	אֶל-	הָאֵלֶּה
		Israel.	all	unto	these
		<u>3478</u>	<u>3605</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>428</u>
		Yisraa'eel	kaal-	'el-	haa'eeleh

This shabbes is known as “*Shabbes shuvah*”. That is because it falls during the ten “Days of Awe” from the blowing of the shofar of repentance on *Yom Teruah* (Rosh Hashanah) to Yom Kippur.

During these ten days we are to do what we might have been putting-off all the other days of the year, and that is getting accounts settled with one another, and then finally with G-d.

The Hebrew word *teshuvah*, which is the descriptive modifier associated with *shabbes shuvah*, is often translated into English as “repentance”. But that word, as currently used in English, doesn’t seem to adequately capture the entirety of the concept.

The church teaches that repentance begins (and often ends) with heartfelt regret for committing a sin. And it even may imply that the sinner will attempt to refrain from that sin in the future. But even with those two elements in place, the common understanding of “repentance” still lacks the most important part of the process... and that is “return”.

In the Hebrew understanding of the concept of *teshuvah*, the step of expressing true regret for the sin is there. Likewise, the step of ceasing the particular sin is there. But what the Hebraic

understanding expects the final step of *teshuvah* to be is a *return* to G-d.

Rabbi Shraga Simmons, an honored scholar who today lives near Modin, Israel, has written on *teshuvah*. What he has to say would sound familiar to those who understand the rabbinical underpinnings of the writings of Rb. Shaul (Paul).

In an article (Aish.com published June 22, 2002) Rb. Simmons wrote:

When a person transgresses a mitzvah in the Torah (violates one of the commands), he destroys some of his inner holiness. He cuts himself off from the Godliness that lies at the essence of his soul.

When a person does Teshuva - "spiritual return" - he renews and rebuilds the inner world that he has destroyed. On one level, he is rebuilding his personal "Temple" so that God's presence (so to speak) will return there to dwell.

Does this sound familiar? It should.

1 Cor 3:16-17

*16 Do you not know that you are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 17 If any man destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him, for the temple of God is holy, and that is what you are.*

1 Cor 6:19-20

*19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*

How do we then rebuild our inner Temple? It begins with a broken heart.

Psalm 51 characterizes, in a beautiful way, the spirit of a broken heart before G-d. Look at all the times it asks G-d to blot-out sin, and to wash him clean.

Ps 51

*51 Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. 4 Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge. 5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me. 6 Behold, Thou dost desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part Thou wilt make me know wisdom. 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. 9 Hide Thy face from my sins, And blot out all my iniquities. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me away from Thy presence, And do not take Thy Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation (Lit. Yeshua), And sustain me with a willing spirit. 13 Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, And sinners will be converted to Thee. 14 Deliver me from*

*bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation;*  
*Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Thy righteousness.*  
*15 O Lord, open my lips, That my mouth may declare  
Thy praise. 16 For Thou dost not delight in sacrifice,  
otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with  
burnt offering. 17 **The sacrifices of God are a broken  
spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou  
wilt not despise.** 18 By Thy favor do good to Zion;  
Build the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then Thou wilt delight  
in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole  
burnt offering; Then young bulls will be offered on  
Thine altar.*

Our sages looked at Psalm 51 and saw something there that made them look beyond mere form of worship... and to see that the focus of G-d is more intensely placed upon the broken heart of the worshipper.

They saw *teshuvah* as far superior to mere sacrifice (See Midrash Vayikra Raba 7:2). They say this verse teaches that when one does teshuva, it is as if that person has personally gone up to Jerusalem, rebuilt the Temple, erected the holy Altar, and offered all the offerings upon it.

If you will read Deut 31:16-17 closely, you will see that G-d knew His people would walk away from Him.

Deut 31:16-17

*16 And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, you are about to lie down with your fathers; and this people will arise and play the harlot with the strange gods of the land, into the midst of which they are going, and will forsake Me and break My covenant which I have made with them. 17 Then My anger will be kindled against them in that day, and I will forsake them and hide My face from them, and they shall be consumed, and many evils and troubles shall come upon them; so that **they will say in that day, 'Is it not because our God is not among us that these evils have come upon us?'***

In that statement there is no repentance... no return. They are blaming G-d's distance from them as the source of the evil among them.

Who created that distance? Did G-d leave them? Or did they (and we) leave Him? You know the answer.

Only a few days ago you heard the sound of the shofar. One hundred blasts were sounded by the Baal Tekiah (the one who was in charge of sounding the blasts from the shofar).

Those blasts represent the voice of G-d, calling us to action. The Hebrew word which most often refers to the blast of the shofar is *teruah*. And one of the shofar calls is named “*teruah*” (nine short blasts).

The Hebrew word *teruah* carries with it a much deeper meaning.

OT:8643 תְּרוּעָה **teruw`ah**  
(ter-oo-aw'); from OT:7321;  
clamor, i.e. acclamation of joy  
or a battle-cry; especially  
clangor of trumpets, as an  
alarum:

*Teruah*, in its purest sense, does not signify a shofar blast. It comes from the root word *ruah*, a primitive Hebrew root signifying a loud voice, a loud shout.

OT:7321 רוּוָּה **ruwa`** (roo-ah'); a primitive root; to mar (especially by breaking); figuratively, to split the ears (with sound), i.e. shout (for alarm or joy):

As a people, we first heard the loud voice or shout associated with G-d at the time we all stood at Mt. Horeb. We were about to hear the “ten words”.

Ex 19:18-21

*18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. 19 **When the sound of the trumpet [shofar] grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him ~~with thunder~~ [lit. by a voice].** 20 And the Lord came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.*

Our people have a legend to explain how G-d got His shofar. It relates to the Akaidah Yitzhak (near-sacrifice of Isaac).

You recall that Yeshua stayed the hand of Abraham as the knife was plunging downward to kill his son. Then Abraham raised his eyes and saw a ram caught by its horn in a thicket. Abraham went to that place, sacrificed the ram there, and his son was saved.

That ram had two horns. Our people believe that Abraham severed both horns from the ram during the sacrifice, and kept one to become the first Hebrew shofar. And Yeshua took the other into heaven for G-d's shofar.

And so in this passage, when Moses spoke to G-d, G-d responds *in an audible voice*. And *all the people* heard the voice of G-d. And they continued to hear that voice as the “ten words” were given.

But you remember that there was a previous time when the voice of G-d was heard on this earth, and we will be reading that passage in the coming days.

Adam and Eve were created by G-d in His image.

Gen 1:27

*And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

Adam sinned by failing to be a proper leader for his wife, and both were led astray by Satan. Soon after that, they stopped glowing with the glory of holiness, and they knew that they had lost eternity.

And G-d showed up in the garden in a very different way.

Gen 3:8-9

*8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. 9 Then the Lord God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?"*

וַיֹּאמֶר	הָאָדָם	אֶל-	אֱלֹהִים	יְהוָה	וַיִּקְרָא <sup>9</sup>
and said	Adam,	unto	God	the Lord	And called
<u>559</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>413</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>3068</u>	<u>7121</u>
wayo'mer	haa'aadaam	'el-	'Elohiym	Yahweh	Wayiqraa'
				אַיְכָה:	לּוֹ
				Where art thou?	unto him,
				<u>335</u>	<u>3807a</u>
				'ayekaah	Low

The G-d of the universe yelled for Adam, crying *ayacha!* This Hebrew word is most often translated into English as “where are you?” But I believe that translation is weak.

The etymology of that word is important. It is a combination of two Hebrew words *aiyn*, and *ka*.

The Hebrew word *aiyn* in fact does carry with it the concept of “where”, so it is not illegitimate to translate it as such. But, in its deepest root, *ayin* invokes the additional concept of “without”.

The Hebrew suffix *ka* is straightforward, and means “you”.

So, let’s re-translate the combination word by using the deeper nuance to *ayin*. We can now properly render the word *aiyaka* as “without you”.

Doing this will clear up an obvious theological conundrum that is created by the other, more common but also more cumbersome, translation.

Translating the phrase as “where are you?” creates two problems. The first is that the G-d of the universe is speaking, and it implies that somehow now Adam and Eve are able to hide from G-d in the garden. Many have done some theological gymnastics to try to make that make sense... but it never did to me.

The second problem is that G-d would ask such a question in the first place. If G-d is all-knowing, then He has no lack of knowledge, and thus no reason to make an inquiry of such a thing as the location of the only human beings on the planet.

So, if we now see that G-d is not asking a question about location, but crying out in anguish regarding the loss of intimacy with Adam and Eve, the passage comes into sharp focus.

The sin of this couple has opened a chasm of distance, and G-d is injured by this displacement.

This displacement didn't just affect these two people... it affected us all. When Adam fell out-of-phase with G-d, all who followed after him were likewise displaced.

Although G-d created Adam in His image... Adam's children were then in the image of Adam.

Gen 5:1-3

*5 This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day when God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female, and He blessed them and named them Man in the day when they were created. 3 When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth.*

After Adam and Eve fell, there was now a rift in eternity. Adam and Eve felt it in their spirit and in their flesh. But G-d felt it infinitely more keenly, for His connection with us was infinitely deeper.

Go back with me now to the garden, that perfect place of harmony where we walked with our Maker in the cool of the evening.

Hear with me G-d's voice now, breaking in the cry.

“I'm without you! Without you!”

Can you now begin to feel the intense sense of loss?

Adam and Eve know why G-d's heart is broken, and why His voice is quavering. And we know that as well. Adam and Eve probably tried to hide. But what is true then is true today. Nobody hides from G-d.

It is for this reason that G-d then sent His Right Arm to bring salvation to Him.

Isa 59:15-16

*Now the Lord saw, And it was displeasing in His sight that there was no justice (also, “righteousness”). 16 And He saw that there was no man, And was astonished that*

*there was no one to intercede; Then His own arm  
(Yeshua) brought salvation (Lit. Yeshua) to Him;*

Only a few days ago, we stood beside running water, and tossed small bits of bread upon it, and watched the current carry them away. The point wasn't to feed the ducks or fish. That tashlich ceremony didn't do anything useful for us at all unless our hearts were right.

When you threw those bits of bread, did you faintly hear G-d's cry, echoing through the ages from the garden? Did you feel the separation?

Did you contemplate the incredibly high cost that was paid so that the gulf of separation between you and the Father might be bridged?

How do you cross that bridge from the darkness of sin to the glorious light of G-d's grace?

1 John 1:9

*9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

Now go back and read Psalm 51 again, and see how these two sections of Scripture dovetail together in the beautiful tapestry of G-d's love. And see how one of the Haftara portions also completes this picture.

Hos 14:1-7

*14 Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God, For you have stumbled because of your iniquity. 2 Take words with you and return to the Lord. Say to Him, "Take away all iniquity, And receive us graciously, That we may present the fruit of our lips. 3 "Assyria will not save us, We will not ride on horses; Nor will we say again, 'Our god,' To the work of our hands; For in Thee the orphan finds mercy." 4 I will heal their apostasy, I will love them freely, For My anger has turned away from them. 5 I will be like the dew to Israel; He will blossom like the lily, And he will take root like the cedars of Lebanon. 6 His shoots will sprout, And his*

*beauty will be like the olive tree, And his fragrance like the cedars of Lebanon. 7 Those who live in his shadow Will again raise grain, And they will blossom like the vine. His renown will be like the wine of Lebanon.*

In just a few more days, the shofar will sound again. This time it is the *tekiah godolah* (the long shofar blast) which concludes the *nilah* service as Yom Kippur comes to an end. Be sure to settle accounts with one another... and with G-d... before that time.

My sweetest brothers and sisters, remember that none of us hides from G-d. His cleansing fire penetrates every corner of our lives. All of our sins will be made known.

Luke 12:2-4

*2 "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. 3 "Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in the inner rooms shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.*

Our confession and our *teshuvah* scrub away the stains that even inner sins bring upon our souls.

*Teshuvah* is a term of action. It cannot be accomplished merely by being sorry for sin, nor by simply stopping that sin. It can only be completed by turning away from sin, and coming back to G-d.

Your soul has already heard G-d's voice crying "Without you! Without you!"

Now I want you to hear His voice crying as the prodigal father did for that child who had wandered so far away.

The story of the prodigal father as found recorded in the gospel is a variation of an older version.

In that older version, the father sent his servant searching for his son. The servant finally found the boy and urged him to return. The boy protested, and said, "I am now too far away from my father, and I cannot return that far back."

The servant had been prepared by the father to answer that objection, and said to the boy, "Then you come back to your father

as far as you are able. And your father will come the rest of the way to you.”

The common theme between the older and the more modern version of the story as told by Yeshua is that as the boy was returning, but yet far off, the father ran to him.

Your Father in heaven loves you more than you can possibly imagine. His heart is broken because He really wants to walk with you hand-in-hand in the garden once again. He wants to put His arm around you once again. He beckons you to come back home.

The sound of the shofar represents the voice of G-d calling you to action. And that action is to return to Him.

Please bow your heads with me and together let's listen to His still, quiet voice calling to each of us now.

“Come back, my precious child, I miss you so... come back.”

Verses for parasha Valalech.

1 Cor 3:16-17

1 Cor 6:19-20

Ps 51

Deut 31:16-17

Ex 19:18-21

Gen 1:27

Gen 3:8-9

Gen 5:1-3

Isa 59:15-16

1 John 1:9

Hos 14:1-7

Luke 12:2-4